

MINUTES
CALLED JOINT MEETING
STEPHENS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND CITY OF TOCCOA COMMISSION
JUNE 11, 2007

Commissioner Peeples called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

PRESENT: Commissioners Kenneth Peeples, Rex Anderson, and Harold Andrews; County Administrator Darrell Hampton; Finance Director Phyllis Ayers; Interim County Clerk Kimberly Ashe and County Attorney Brian Ranck.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO DISCUSS SPLOST WITH THE CITY OF TOCCOA AND THE TOWN OF MARTIN.

Commissioner Peeples began by stating that he felt like some clarification was needed on the SPLOST V Committee and their duties. The Committee consists of Darrell Hampton, Brian Ranck, Billy Morse, Jon Dickerson, and Bob Stovall, appointed by the Town of Martin. "This Committee has four duties," Commissioner Peeples stated.

1. Determine total estimated SPLOST V revenues.
2. Develop a project list with budgets.
3. Gather and review information from the public.
4. Recommend projects that are reasonable with projected funds.

This Committee will report back to The Commission for a vote by The Commission on which projects to pursue with the upcoming SPLOST. Commissioner Peeples reminded everyone that there are only 35 days to get this finalized. "We *must* use our time wisely," he stated.

County Attorney Brian Ranck reiterated the fact that this committee has *no* voting rights; they are strictly to offer advice to The Commission.

Billy Chism from the City of Toccoa asked," what would happen if the group was divided two to two?

Commissioner Andrews stated that in that case he guessed that they could both present to The Commission.

Commissioner Peeples addressed the committee asking when and where the next meeting would take place. County Administrator and committee member Darrell Hampton spoke up responding that the meetings would all be held in the meeting room at the Annex, a date and time had not been set as of yet but be scheduled following adjournment of this

meeting and that notice would be forwarded to the media and public as quickly as possible.

Commissioners Chairman Kenneth Peeples then opened the floor to the citizens for comment.

Mr. Aubre Grafton, Clerk of Court expressed the need for a records retention center and wished The Commission to consider this as a SPLOST V item. He stated that now the court records are stored in three different sites. Mr. Grafton had no costs or budgets prepared for consideration by The Commission. Some discussion followed listing the old jail, the old hospital, the old middle school or maybe evens the annex as a possible records center. It was suggested that some estimates be gathered on this project.

Mitch Griggs approached The Commission and asked to clarify a funding request that had been made by the Development Authority. A Multi County Industrial Park is on the tentative SPLOST project list; this is only in the concept phase. The Development Authority has no formal agreement with anyone on this. This funding, if received would be used to purchase land.

Andy Pavliscsak, City Commissioner was the next citizen to speak before The Commission. He stated that he was very troubled by the fact that it appeared that the multiuse area including the State Patrol Barracks had already been scrapped. He stated that this operation should be viewed as an investment in our community. Commissioner Pavliscsak stated, "I would ask that you please put it back in!"

Commissioner Peeples suggested that he as well as all other concerned citizens pass along their thoughts and feelings to the SPLOST V committee.

Next, Art Suttan addressed The Commission and asked that they please continue to consider the value to our community as well as the special opportunity that we have at this time to work with The School Board to build an Arts Center. He stated that this project would require only five (5) million of the estimated twenty four (24) million in revenue from SPLOST V.

Mr. Gary Steppe, Stephens County School Superintendent spoke next voicing his support of the project. Mr. Steppe provided a handout with several suggestions prepared by their architect as well as estimated cost for each. He stated that he, as well as the school board was very excited about the possibility of this project. He and the board felt as though it could be a win/ win situation for the entire community.

Ms. Carmen Gregg stated her support for the project. A comment was made by Mr. Billy Chism concerning the fact that a facility of this size was not needed because it would sit empty a good portion of the time. Ms. Gregg reminded the group of the fact that our football stadium sits empty nearly all year.

The next citizen to speak was Mr. James Thomas, School Board Member. Mr. Thomas gave the locations of several joint facilities that had been constructed recently. Jonesboro, Newnan, Cowetta County, Greenville, TN, and Wilmington, NC all have all constructed arts centers with joint funding. He stated, “This is not something brand new – it has and can be done.

City Commissioner Ferrell Morgan spoke next. He stated, “If the jail is good enough for people, it should be good enough for storage.” Mr. Morgan stated that he felt that a performing arts center was the one thing that we lacked in this community. He mentioned that time was of the essence; everyone should state our needs and get it done.

Commissioner Peeples addressed the crowd briefly stating that Mr. Morgan was correct. We have thirty-five (35) days. “We are not working for ourselves on this matter; we are working for our kids and grandkids. In thirty-five days this commission will have to step away and you guys will have to get this thing (SPLOST V) past.” Commissioner Peeples stated.

Next Cam Parker spoke on the benefits of the Arts Center expressing his support, then following up with his feelings on the necessity of infrastructure for development in our area.

Mr. Bill Good spoke expressing support of the Arts Center and his feelings on the necessity of funding for development.

Mr. Terry Carter addressed The Commission bringing up the point that infrastructure is a need, the jail is a done deal, and there is a large group in support of the Arts Center. By having SPLOST V support all groups you increase your odds of passing SPLOST V.

Commissioner Peeples again reiterated that he expected each of the people that have spoken before The Commission to speak before the SPLOST committee as well.

Jonsey Haygood spoke briefly on the importance of having correct project estimates before approaching the committee.

Mitch Griggs asked if the Development Authority was to be a part of the SPLOST committee. The answer of, no, was given by the commission. Commissioner Andrews added that the presence of the Development Authority may be called for to provide information to the Committee.

Superintendent Gary Steppe expressed his appreciation of the cooperation between the city, county, and school board in discussing this matter.

Closing comments were made by each of the Commissioners stating the challenges that lie ahead as well as the need for public input. The critical need for cooperation between all groups involved was stated.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Peeples thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2007.

Kenneth Peeples, Chairman

Attest

Kimberly Ashe, Interim County Clerk